



E. Bellas
(Bluesman)

FATHER NEWMAN'S
INFLUENCE

ON

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

LONDON: BURNS AND OATES,

Portman Street and Paternoster Row.

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PRINTED BY W. DAVY AND SON, GILBERT STREET, W.

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The Nineteenth Century.

It falls to the lot of few men to form the minds of a generation; few men have sufficient depth and breadth and heart to move a mass of human beings, to instil into them new lines of thought which shall permeate and change their view of matters of eternal interest—their previous opinions of sacred events, and the bearing of these events on their own minds.

Father Newman's influence on the present generation of educated English gentlemen is far deeper and will be more lasting than that of any other living man.

It cannot but be a question of deep interest to Catholics, even more than Protestants, to try and discover wherein has been the charm which has

worked such palpable results. We will endeavour briefly to lay open to our readers a few thoughts which will give a cue to the fact we are considering.

Father Newman has written an *Apologia*, wherein he shows us how certain actions and doings affected him, how he was led on by study, and, humanly speaking, by his intensely logical mind, to embrace the Catholic Faith; he has showed us all this, painful as it must have been to him to have exposed his heart-thoughts for the sneers or disapprobation of that numerous body which we call "the public," and which is so utterly unable in its corporate capacity to understand and enter into the feelings of a mind which is so above the ordinary run. We, in unison with all thinking men, are most grateful to Fr. Newman for his *Apologia*; but it does not tell us, because it cannot, all we would wish to know of him. He can and has spoken of how certain acts affected him, how certain lines of thought led him to the arms of Mother Church; he cannot tell us how his actions and his life

acted on his fellow men. But, in order to understand his influence over others, it is above all things necessary to consult those who saw him every day while he was at Oxford, who heard those classic sermons at St. Mary's, who knew of those daily prayers and weekly communions at Littlemore, who were his contemporaries during those brief years in which he led the mind of Oxford Christianity and stamped on the minds of thousands a feeling of Catholicity which has by no means ceased to bear fruit.

Shortly before Fr. Newman became a Catholic, a Review was started by some of the ablest Anglicans of the time, and which existed for over twenty years—the *Christian Remembrancer*. We propose to dip into some old volumes of this Review, and see if we cannot by its aid throw ourselves vividly into the feeling men had for Dr. Newman in 1844, and what they thought of him; it will enable us, as nothing else will, to gain an insight into the cause of Fr. Newman's influence on the nineteenth century.

He was, as our readers are aware, the author

of the celebrated *Tract 90*, which was condemned by the Heads of Houses as unsound. As soon as he found that the Catholic views he had there promulgated were condemned by the authorities, what did he do? Did he protest, did he write to reviews or newspapers declaiming against his Bishop or the Heads of Houses? No! He quietly withdrew from the movement—he was consistent, he would not act against his Bishop, and so, quietly he laid by his pen and withdrew from the struggle. Our readers will see how different this mode of action was, how more noble and dignified than the course pursued by modern Ritualists—those clerical Communists who acknowledge no superior, who bow to no authority.

To those of our readers to whom the details of the Oxford movement is unknown, we may mention that Dr. Newman was the real leader, though half unconsciously; and, when he became partially aware how men drank in his very words, he shrank from the thought. Hugh Rose was a Cambridge man, and so separated from the

source of action ; Keble was a Christian poet, but not a conscious or unconscious leader ; Ward was too fond of startling men by bold and unheard-of statements—too argumentative—to be a leader.

Hear, then, the *Remembrancer* on the withdrawal and silence of Dr. Newman. Our readers will find it in an article, “Recent Proceedings at Oxford,” in 1845.

“After the first stir of its publication (Tr. 90), the controversy on the Tract had ceased so far as he was concerned. Not a word had come from him ; not a breath had been heard, either accusing others, or defending himself. The air around him was motionless. Waiving the privilege which all men take in such situations, he had made no stand, maintained no self-vindication ; had not resisted, struggled, contended, disputed. The charge had been made and he had retired. The judge and the censurer had done their work easily, and had had nothing to complain of. Serene, resigned, uncontentious—the object of their efforts had quietly seconded and anticipated

them. The hand which was waving him off the scene found him gone while it was extending itself. A quiet pathway had conveyed him elsewhere, and his traces were visible all around—himself not seen. Did he make one effort to challenge or elicit force, to parry blows, or to return them, though abundantly equal to the contest? Not one. He was wished away, and he went away.”

A little further on the Reviewer writes,—

“Many a deep mind, has, before now, resisted the world better by leaving it, and shaken it more by its absence than its presence.”

Our readers will, we think, thank us for this painful picture so beautifully drawn. Seldom have we seen more clearly depicted the loss of a brother, an elder brother, and a mother, so combined. The womanly manliness,—the plaintive regret that he who was so evidently beloved, should have been so condemned, and being so condemned have thus meekly taken the rebuke of his enemies.

Do we not here see a faint glimpse of a heart

which by its tenderness and humility was preparing for those proud conquests which hereafter he should make—those numberless converts to the Faith who were and have been attracted less perhaps by his books than by his bearing, which our readers have in a slight degree had laid before them?

We will again return to our Reviewer.

“He had what is considered now-a-days a great position indeed—a pulpit which attracted its crowd every Sunday. He had the future race of English Clergy hearing him. Did he value, and feel tender about, and cling to his position? Not at all. Would that he had been more tender about it than he was! but he gave it up as quietly as if he had been leaving a room.”

What is the great principle on which Father Newman here acted? What is the lesson it conveys to our readers? That, whatever may be our trials, however much we may be misunderstood, yet, let our DUTY be our first and only thought. No man was better able then

than now to pay back by his pen what his opponents might say against him. Then, *as now*, his way seems to be to do his duty, and to give no sign when maligned or misinterpreted. From 1845 to 1864 is a long time for a man to feel that he is not understood, yet from 1845 to 1864 he put aside, as not worthy of consideration, persistent semi-calumniation.

In 1846 the *Remembrancer* had an article called "The recent Schism," in which another aspect of Fr. Newman's character is unfolded, another cause of his influence displayed.

"For ourselves, we must say, one of Mr. Newman's Sermons is to us a marvellous production. It has perfect power, and perfect nature; but the latter it is which makes it so great. A sermon of Mr. Newman's enters into all our feelings, ideas, modes of viewing things. He puts himself into the place of others, whom he is speaking to or speaking of, and is able, by the force of a mixed sympathy and penetration, to feel their feelings and think their thoughts. He wonderfully realizes a state of mind, enters

into a difficulty, a temptation, a disappointment, a grief; he goes into the different turns and incidental unconscious symptoms of a case, into notions which come into the head, and go out again, and are forgotten till some chance recalls them. All is brought out, and put in a thoroughly natural way before his hearer and reader. What that power of mind is, by which a man realizes a feeling which he really has not himself, by which he makes himself another, and multiplies self indefinitely, it may be difficult and perhaps impossible to say; but whatever it is, Mr. Newman has it most deeply."

Here, in 1846, we find the explanation of Fr. Newman's excessive charity in judgment, his great care in stating truths in such a way that "the little ones of Christ" shall not stumble. He realizes the feelings of others, though not himself feeling their difficulties; he throws himself into their way of looking at things, and tries, like a tender parent, to help the poor weak child of Christ over the difficulties which to it seem so great, so unsurmountable.

We might say much more of Fr. Newman, but our object is a practical one, and we have said sufficient to show the cause of Fr. Newman's power and influence for good. It may (apart from his learning) be comprised in two things.

Firstly,—Obedience and Humility.

Secondly,—A due regard for the feelings and the weaknesses of his brother men.

To young Catholics who have life before them, we think we have sufficiently pointed out the example we would have them follow.













